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Oblivion

Carly Mensch

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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OBLIVION was first produced by the Westport Country Playhouse (Mark Lamos, Artistic Director; Michael Ross, Managing Director) in Westport, Connecticut. The opening night was August 24, 2013. The performance was directed by Mark Brokaw, with sets by Neil Patel, costumes by Michael Krass, lighting by Japhy Weideman, and sound/original music by Obadiah Evans. The Production Stage Manager was Matthew Melchiorre. The cast was as follows:

PAM Johanna Day
DIXON Reg Rogers
JULIE Katie Broad
BERNARD Aidan Kunze

OBLIVION was developed by Steppenwolf Theatre Company through its New Plays Initiative and was presented as part of its First Look Repertory of New Work at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, Illinois (Martha Lavey, Artistic Director; David Hawkanson, Executive Director).

OBLIVION was commissioned by Playwrights Horizons with funds provided by Kate and Seymour Weingarten

CHARACTERS

PAM – 40's

DIXON – 40's

JULIE – 16

BERNARD – 16

SETTING

Brooklyn, New York

TIME

Now

ACT ONE

1.

(A sprawling loft apartment. Exposed brick, books everywhere.)

(JULIE, a lanky girl in basketball sweats, sits in the hot seat being interrogated by her mother, PAM. Her father, DIXON, meanwhile, a big, artfully disheveled guy, sits nearby reading The New Yorker.)

(We are hours into this fight and everyone's feeling it. Stalemate.)

PAM. Just say it. Just say it and we can all go to bed.

JULIE. Say what?

PAM. How many hours are you going to keep this up for?

JULIE. I'm telling the truth.

PAM. You are not.

JULIE. I am.

PAM. Jules. I'm tired. Your Dad's tired. Everyone's tired.

(JULIE shrugs.)

Dixon, can you please say something here?

(beat)

DIXON. Don't lie. Lying is bad.

(DIXON goes back to reading.)

PAM. Dix!

DIXON. What?

PAM. Don't make me the bad guy here.

DIXON. I'm not. I said don't lie. She shouldn't lie, right?
I said that.

JULIE. Is this because of menopause?

PAM. Excuse me?

JULIE. You're being like, really irrational.

PAM. I am way, *way* too young for that, thank you very much.

JULIE. You're 46.

PAM. Okay. I see what you're doing here. Not going to work.

JULIE. I'm just stating the facts. You're 46. That's how old you are.

(DIXON smirks. JULIE notices and smirks too. PAM notices both of them. They stop.)

(PAM holds up a glossy Wesleyan brochure.)

PAM. Tell me about Wesleyan.

JULIE. Again?

PAM. Yes.

JULIE. I've told you like three times.

PAM. You arrived Saturday morning.

JULIE. Yeah. We took Metro North, Saturday morning, like I told you.

PAM. And then – Bernard's sister picked you up.

JULIE. Uh huh.

PAM. Can I have her number?

JULIE. I don't have it.

PAM. You spent the entire weekend with her yet you didn't write down her cell phone number?

JULIE. Yeah, because Bernard had it.

PAM. What about classes? What classes did you sit in on?

JULIE. Intro to French Lit.

PAM. What was the topic?

JULIE. Roland Barthes.

PAM. The same Roland Barthes you're currently learning about in *high school* French class?

JULIE. Yeah.

PAM. Hmm. What a coincidence.

JULIE. He's a popular twentieth century figure.

PAM. So they have classes on weekends? At Wesleyan?

JULIE. ... No. It was a study group. Sorry. But the TA was there. Because, the prof had cancelled a class earlier that week. So it was like a make-up class.

(beat)

PAM. Ladies and Gentleman. I rest my case!

JULIE. No!

PAM. Julie – if you didn't go to Wesleyan, I don't care. Just tell me. I will not be offended if you don't want to go to my alma mater. Even though, it's a very good school. You should consider it.

JULIE. I did. I went.

PAM. Clearly you didn't.

JULIE. *Clearly* you're acting like a psychotic bitch.

(pause)

(DIXON sees PAM's hurt.)

DIXON. This writer. He keeps using this construction "and yet but so." *And yet but so*. I don't even know what that means. It's like some Boolean logic problem. Like he translated the whole thing into Russian, took out all the verbs and then translated it back into English. This is the goddamn New Yorker for chrissake. It's called *standards* of American English. It's called basic human decency.

PAM. (softly) Honey.

DIXON. What?

PAM. You're performing.

DIXON. I was just trying –
Nevermind.

(silence)

PAM. Julie. Your integrity is vital. If your dad and I can teach you one thing – instill one fundamental moral value – it's to always, always tell the truth.

(pause)

JULIE. Always?

PAM. Yes. Always.

JULIE. But. You're a moral relativist.

PAM. ... So?

JULIE. You and Dad. You don't believe in right and wrong.

PAM. Okay. That is a *gross* misinterpretation of moral relativism.

JULIE. That's what it sounds like.

PAM. What what sounds like?

JULIE. Your...belief system.

PAM. You think our belief system amounts to "Do whatever you want?"

JULIE. ... No. I'm just saying.

PAM. Yes. Please explain to me your logic this evening. Please.

JULIE. I don't know! Okay? I just don't understand why this is such a big deal. It's like you guys suddenly turned into the Gestapo. You gave me permission to go away this weekend, I went, I came back, and so. What's the big deal?

PAM. The big deal is you *lied* to us.

JULIE. I didn't!

PAM. I give up.

(to DIXON) Can you please explain to her why she's wrong? She listens to you.

(DIXON lowers the magazine.)

DIXON. Julie – you're lying. We already know that. It's a white lie, so, whatever, fuck it, doesn't really matter. We don't actually care wherever you happened to be

gallivanting around this weekend since you're clearly still alive and breathing. But we *do* care about the fact you seem to be so *nonchalant* about lying to us, especially since we're pretty chilled out people who are trying to impart some actual *knowledge* to you – mainly, if you want to have a rich and meaningful *relationship* with someone, in this case, us, you should bite the bullet, swallow your pride and learn to tell the truth. This isn't some pre-packaged dogma bullshit we're trying to brainwash you with here. This is about basic human trust. Like real basic human being shit. Also, this is clearly driving your mom insane. So. Think of the larger picture.

(beat)

PAM. Do you have anything you want to say to us now?

(JULIE *thinks about it.*)

JULIE. No.

2.

(The laundromat. JULIE and BERNARD wait for clothes to finish in the dryer. BERNARD, a nerdy Korean kid aims an old-school Super-8 camera at JULIE's face.)

BERNARD. Can you look away, like, wistful?

JULIE. Why am I wistful?

BERNARD. It doesn't matter.

(JULIE looks away wistfully while BERNARD films.)

JULIE. Can you *believe* I have to wash my own clothes? It's like I'm homeless.

BERNARD. Aren't you guys rich? Don't you have like people doing your laundry in the basement?

JULIE. I'm being punished for calling my Mom a psychotic bitch. I hate my mom.

BERNARD. Your Mom is awesome.

JULIE. Trust me. She's like, a monster. You would be totally terrified of her.

BERNARD. She works for HBO. She's like – my hero.

JULIE. She sits behind a desk. She's not like – an artist or anything.

BERNARD. Wait! Don't move.

JULIE. Why not?

BERNARD. Just stay exactly as you are right now.

(BERNARD rubs some chapstick on the camera lens then films the perfect shot of JULIE.)

JULIE. Can I move yet?

BERNARD. No.

JULIE. Does your film have a story or is it just me doing random things?

BERNARD. You're my protagonist.

JULIE. But I never really do anything.

BERNARD. It's a generational portrait.

JULIE. Did you get the three-pointer I made against Fieldston?

BERNARD. Yeah.

JULIE. I want a copy of that.

BERNARD. Okay.

JULIE. What are you going to do with it when you're finished?

BERNARD. Send it to Pauline Kael.

JULIE. Who's Pauline Kael?

BERNARD. *You* don't know who Pauline Kael is?

JULIE. No.

BERNARD. How can you live in New York City and not know who Pauline Kael is?

(BERNARD turns off the camera. He goes to his backpack and pulls out an old battered copy of Pauline Kael's For Keeps. It's a massive tome, over 1,000 pages.)

It's basically my bible.

JULIE. So who is she?

BERNARD. A film critic. A really, really important film critic.

JULIE. Oh.

BERNARD. I've read this book maybe five hundred times. I have the preface memorized.

JULIE. So what. You're just going to send it to her?

BERNARD. That's what Wes Anderson did with his first film. He just drove to her house in Massachusetts and made her watch it. I heard him say that on Charlie Rose.

JULIE. What if she doesn't like it?

BERNARD. She probably won't. She doesn't really like anything.

JULIE. So then why are you sending it to her?

BERNARD. I need brutal honesty, not the blind encouragement of my peers.

(JULIE checks on her clothes to see if they're done.)

JULIE. My Mom. She's totally spazzing out about last weekend. Just, FYI.

BERNARD. Why? What did you tell her?

JULIE. I said I was with you.

BERNARD. So why is she spazzing out?

JULIE. Because I also said we went to Wesleyan and hung out with your sister and a bunch of other minor details.

(beat)

BERNARD. I don't have a sister.

JULIE. Who's that girl who's always at your house?

BERNARD. Sue-Jean? My cousin?

JULIE. Crap!

BERNARD. I'm an only child. That's why I'm so independent and non-competitive.

JULIE. Do you think if my parents called Sue-Jean, she could say she's your sister?

BERNARD. You're parents want to call my cousin!?

JULIE. No. Just if for some reason –

BERNARD. I knew it! I knew this was a bad idea.

JULIE. They're not gonna do it.

BERNARD. I don't understand why you can't just tell them.

JULIE. My parents?

BERNARD. Yes. They're like, the most open-minded liberal people on the planet.

JULIE. They are not open-minded.

BERNARD. Uh huh.

JULIE. You've never even met them. They think they're so above everyone.

BERNARD. Whatever. My parents never even went to college. If they find out I entangled my cousin in some white kid's cover-up story, I'm gonna be like sent to like, North Korea.

JULIE. My parents aren't going to entangle anyone. Because then they would have to pretend they actually care

where I was, which they don't. My Dad even admitted it. He said they're just trying to teach me a lesson about "ethics" or something.

BERNARD. I hate lying.

JULIE. You don't have to *lie*; just don't say anything.

BERNARD. I'm not like you. I can't just make stuff up on the spot.

JULIE. They're not gonna ask.

BERNARD. Good.

JULIE. But...if for some reason...

BERNARD. See! I knew it!

JULIE. Just if they ask.

All you have to do is confirm we went on a college tour. Which is half-true since we slept in a dorm.

Come on. How many hours have I put into this movie? I'm your protagonist, Bernard. You need me. Your film needs me.

Like, if for some reason I was to drop out –

BERNARD. No!

JULIE. Promise then?

(**BERNARD** looks at **JULIE**. *He adores her.*)

BERNARD. ... Fine.

JULIE. Say it: I promise.

BERNARD. I promise.

3.

(Later that evening. Game night. PAM and DIXON laze picnic-style on the floor. It's been a good night – a.k.a. whisky and Boggle. Nearby, a plastic hourglass counts down as they scribble words on little notepads.)

PAM. Hey! Oh my god you are so cheating.

DIXON. I was just comparing.

PAM. How come there are so many vowels? Are you only seeing vowels?

DIXON. Look clockwise.

PAM. Where? I think I'm –

DIXON. Cognitively compromised? Agreed.

PAM. I'm not!

DIXON. You're a lightweight. That was part of my strategy.

PAM. You got me *drunk*?

DIXON. I got us both drunk – level playing field.

(They play.)

PAM. Do you think Julie drinks?

DIXON. She might be drinking protein powder. The occasional energy drink.

PAM. She should.

DIXON. Drink?

PAM. Yeah. She might loosen up a bit. She's so...

DIXON. You're saying, you want our kid to be a lush?

PAM. Not a lush! But a recreational drinker would be fine.
I wish she went out more. You know? To parties. Had more friends.

DIXON. She's got Bernard.

PAM. Bernard is a God-send. He's a saint. He's a –

DIXON. Time!

PAM. What? Already?

DIXON. Yeah, we forgot about the timer.

(DIXON scribbles one last word.)

PAM. Hey!

(They swap answer pads to tabulate scores.)

DIXON. *(looking at PAM's words)* Yup. Had that. Had that.

PAM. *(looking at DIXON's)* SLURPY?

DIXON. Not bad, right?

PAM. SLURPY is not a word.

DIXON. It's a noun.

PAM. It's a beverage.

DIXON. It's a genre of beverage.

PAM. I'll give you two points for SLURP.

DIXON. Three. It's a meaningful utterance.

PAM. You take one linguistics class in college and...

DIXON. I am a word connoisseur. Yup. Three points please.

PAM. No way, and I will use brute force if I have to.

(PAM makes a grab for his answer pad.)

DIXON. You're very adorable when you drink. You get all self-righteous.

PAM. Because you're a bully.

DIXON. *Two points.* No points.

PAM. Games have rules. That's like, the defining element of a game.

DIXON. See what I mean? Don't worry, it's cute.

PAM. Hey – condescending.

DIXON. Forgive me, you're a strong, independent woman.

PAM. Thank you.

DIXON. You're Madame Vice President.

PAM. Madame *Senior* Vice President.

DIXON. freakin' Rosie the Riveter.

DIXON. Come here.

(They kiss.)

(PAM pulls away suddenly.)

PAM. Am I a bitch?

DIXON. In general...?

PAM. You didn't say anything. When Julie called me that.

DIXON. I...apologize. I was playing Switzerland.

PAM. She's never behaved like this before. Lied to us? To our faces?

DIXON. Well. Not that we know of.

PAM. She used to tell us everything. When that creep Elliot Crumbine offered her ecstasy. She woke me up in the middle of the night to talk about it. Now. It's like I'm the enemy.

DIXON. Mother daughter stuff is tricky.

PAM. Do we punish her? Is that how we're supposed to deal with this?

DIXON. Off with her head!

PAM. Because she has to learn. We are not okay with this.

DIXON. No...

PAM. ...And it's not just something you learn intellectually. You have to *feel* it. It's something you have to learn with your whole body.

DIXON. Mm-hmm. Body. Yes.

PAM. Before it's programmed in. You know? Before it becomes a habit.

DIXON. Before what becomes a habit?

PAM. Lying.

DIXON. Oh. We're still on that?

PAM. You don't think it's important?

DIXON. What?

PAM. Integrity.

DIXON. Sure, in theory.

PAM. In life.

DIXON. We should play more Boggle. Boggle is a fun game.

PAM. You never take me seriously.

DIXON. I never take anything seriously.

PAM. I'm trying to say something here.

DIXON. You want me to break out the philosophy books?
Have a real debate with you? Cause I can do that –

PAM. Okay.

DIXON. Okay well I'm not going to do that. You'd demolish me.

PAM. I think we fucked up somewhere. Parenting wise.

DIXON. We did not fuck up.

PAM. Somehow we've given her the impression that we have no moral standards, so clearly she's in need of *some* parameters.

DIXON. I thought we decided never to be like this. Parents with rules.

PAM. She lied to us. To our faces.

DIXON. C'mon. You lie. I lie. Everybody lies.

PAM. I do not lie.

DIXON. You've definitely lied to me.

PAM. I never lie to you.

DIXON. Not like Machiavellian deception...

PAM. No. Never.

DIXON. Okay. You probably don't even notice it.

PAM. Try me.

DIXON. Okay. Fine. Do you like this shirt?

PAM. (*honestly*) No.

DIXON. Do you think it's good I quit my job?

PAM. Definitely.

DIXON. Really?

PAM. It was killing you. Plus. Corporate law is evil and depressing and now you have the opportunity to expose those craven ass-holes in a tell-all best-selling book.

DIXON. I love you. That's the truth. No room for argument there. Kiss me again.

(PAM hesitates, but does and soon relaxes into him again. Paradise restored.)

PAM. Read to me from your book.

DIXON. And kill the mood?

PAM. I like being proud of you.

DIXON. Well in that case...

(DIXON gets his laptop.)

PAM. We should send it to John Grisham. We should track down John Grisham and send it to him.

DIXON. Actually – he went to law school with one of our former associates.

(He opens it open. Clicks open a document.)

(He lets her read over his shoulder.)

Do you need context?

PAM. No. I remember. The guy sued the other guy and some judge is in jail.

DIXON. Close enough.

(reading) “First case is Schneiter versus Magruder,” Spicer announced as if a major antitrust trial was about to start.

“Schneiter’s not here,” Beech said.”

“Where is he?”

“Infirmary. Gallstones again.”

PAM. Gallstones!

DIXON. “... Beach was fifty-six, the youngest of the three, and with nine years to go he was convinced he would die in prison. He’d been a federal judge in East Texas, a hardfisted conservative who knew lots of Scripture and liked to quote it during trials.”

That’s enough for tonight.

PAM. No! I love it. I love gallstones.

DIXON. It still needs work.

PAM. It’s great. I think it’s so brave what you’re doing. Starting over. I couldn’t do it.

(PAM smiles.)

PAM. We should smoke.

DIXON. (*feigning*) What!?

PAM. I know you have some.

DIXON. I might have some left over. Maybe.

(*beat*)

I am very surprised you're initiating this. Wait. Unless this is a trap?

PAM. We're adults.

DIXON. I thought you didn't like me smoking.

PAM. I don't like you smoking alone. With me is fine.

DIXON. All these rules of yours... It's very hard to keep track.

(*JULIE enters carrying her backpack and sport bag. She stares at them on the floor. Disturbed, disapproving.*)

PAM. Want to come join us? We're having a very romantic game night.

(*beat*)

DIXON. Boggle.

(*JULIE stares at them some more.*)

JULIE. Practice went late. Call coach if you don't believe me.

4.

(The next day. DIXON is home alone. He wears a bathrobe and pajama pants and has a work-station set up that consists of a laptop and some library books. He's not working, however. He's rolling a joint. A box of Nilla wafers sits nearby.)

(After a moment, the sound of someone at the front door. Keys jangling. DIXON hides the joint. Enter BERNARD.)

BERNARD. Julie said you wouldn't be home.

DIXON. Of course I'm home. I work from home.

BERNARD. *(avoiding eye contact)* Don't you have, um, a shift at the Food Co-op?

DIXON. Shit. Is it Thursday?

BERNARD. Yeah.

DIXON. Guess we're not having organic brussels sprouts for dinner.

Do you know that place? In Park Slope. It's a very passive-aggressive grocery store.

BERNARD. No. I live in Queens. We shop at this place H-Mart.

(beat)

I'm Bernard.

DIXON. I figured.

(pause)

BERNARD. I should go.

DIXON. No, I've been hoping to meet you for a while. So, this is actually quite serendipitous. Stay. Chillax.

(BERNARD doesn't chillax.)

BERNARD. Julie forgot to bring in the poster for our French presentation.

DIXON. On what?

BERNARD. Carla Bruni. The supermodel turned pop singer turned political trophy wife.

DIXON. Only in France, right?

BERNARD. Only in France what?

DIXON. A sex symbol as first lady. Part of my book is set in France. In the South. It's very sensual. Very French.

BERNARD. You're writing a book?

DIXON. Yup. First time.

BERNARD. I thought you were a lawyer.

DIXON. Was. The law was starting to feel a little too stringent. I'm much more interested in grey areas now. And I had a little... I guess what you'd call a minor breakdown. I'm sure Julie told you...?

BERNARD. Yeah.

(beat)

I'm making a film.

DIXON. Oh yeah?

BERNARD. It's black and white. Silent.

DIXON. Sounds like a real block-buster.

BERNARD. It's a generational portrait.

DIXON. You dress very strangely.

BERNARD. Thanks.

(pause)

Julie has class.

DIXON. I told you. Water under the bridge.

BERNARD. I had a free so I said I'd come. I'm just trying to explain why I interrupted –

DIXON. You're not interrupting.

BERNARD. Cause it looked like I was interrupting...

(BERNARD timidly nods to the joint.)

DIXON. Ah. Busted.

(beat)

You want in?

BERNARD. Is that –

DIXON. Pot? Yes. I'm not condoning it. Just offering.

BERNARD. Uh –

DIXON. No pressure. Totally your decision.

BERNARD. Okay.

DIXON. Okay you want some?

BERNARD. ... Sure.

DIXON. Don't tell Pam though. She doesn't like when I smoke during the day.

BERNARD. Is Pam...?

DIXON. My wife.

BERNARD. Right. I only know your last names.

DIXON. Back in the spring, I was up to about a gram, gram and a half a day. Self-medicating, filling the void, that sort of thing. Now that I quit my job though, I'm much more of a recreational abuser.

(DIXON lights the joint and passes it to BERNARD. They pass back and forth during the following conversation.)

Can I ask you something personal?

BERNARD. ...Um. Okay.

DIXON. Would you mind listening to some of my book?

BERNARD. *(relieved)* Yeah. Sure. I thought you were....
Nevermind.

DIXON. I haven't shared this with anybody yet. But. Since you're a fellow artist. And well, frankly, I could use a man's perspective.

It's on the laptop.

BERNARD. Oh.

(DIXON gestures to the laptop. BERNARD retrieves it.)

DIXON. Seriously though. This is top secret stuff.

This chapter is called. The French Ambassador's Daughter.

(reading) "... He leaned her back against the desk, back against the splintering sunlit mahogany. Her hair knotted up in one of those awe-inspiring messy buns she liked to wear. She was

awe-inspiring, the French Ambassador's daughter. She was also epileptic, which accounted for the ad hoc seizures she often drifted in and out of during sex. She gripped the desk behind her. His mouth dropped open, his very core pulsating with the *stuff* of the earth. He leaned in and whispered into her ear: "Have you taken your medication?" "No," she replied. "But I like it better this way."

(beat)

So?

BERNARD. You wrote that?

DIXON. Yes. Yes, I did.

BERNARD. It's good. It's cinematic. Like I could see it in a movie.

DIXON. You're a smart kid Bernard.

You know, you kids are lucky, growing up in the city.

The access to culture. The constant stimuli.

I can already see the effect on Julie. She's much more resourceful than I was at that age. Tougher too.

BERNARD. Well, she is a Varsity athlete.

DIXON. Right? How twisted is that: Two urban sophisticates give birth to a high school basketball player. Go figure.

What about you. You play any sports?

BERNARD. No. I'm non-competitive, in general.

DIXON. I hear that. I hear ya.

(beat)

I have an enlarged prostate.

BERNARD. Excuse me?

DIXON. Just doing the guy talk here. Trying to loosen the mood.

BERNARD. I'm sorry.

DIXON. Hey. No pity. You live, you die, right? Can't do anything about it.

BERNARD. I guess not.

DIXON. Let me ask you something Bernard.

You and Julie. You two've been spending a lot of time together.

BERNARD. Yeah.

DIXON. Julie doesn't have many other friends, I've noticed.

BERNARD. She has her teammates, but. I guess she's not really close to any of them.

DIXON. So you'd say you're pretty intimate.

BERNARD. We're not –

DIXON. I'm not asking about that.

BERNARD. Oh. So what are you asking?

DIXON. This last weekend. Just between you and me. You don't have to give me details.

(**BERNARD** *freezes.*)

I just want to make sure Julie's not in over her head.

BERNARD. Trust me, she's not.

DIXON. I'm just looking for a general sense, that's all.

BERNARD. Really. It's nothing serious.

DIXON. You go to a rave? Is that it? Like in some big warehouse with drugs?

BERNARD. No. I thought Julie already told you that we were at –

DIXON. Wesleyan? Come on, I'm not an idiot. I know my own kid better than that.

I'm just so goddamn curious! You know? We give her no boundaries, no restrictions, so what the hell could she be so embarrassed about? Is this about sex, is that it?

BERNARD. No.

DIXON. With...either gender.

BERNARD. Mr. –

DIXON. It's Dixon, please.

BERNARD. She wasn't doing anything wrong, Dixon, I promise.

DIXON. Sex isn't wrong. Sex is good. Sex is beautiful.

BERNARD. This isn't about sex.

DIXON. Did someone get hurt? Is she in trouble?

BERNARD. No. It's nothing, really.

DIXON. And yet. The mind speculates. The infinite permutations.

Especially now. With my health. You know. The whole prostate thing.

(Pause. DIXON leans in.)

You'll understand this a lot better when you're older, Bernard. Especially when you're a parent. But there's nothing scarier than the unknown. As long as you can put a face to it, put a name to the thing you're up against, then no matter how bad it is, no matter how ugly or uncomfortable or even illegal, then at least you know. But *not* knowing. That's the worst. That's the shit that keeps you up at night.

(silence)

BERNARD. If I tell you where we are – just where we were – will you swear not to tell Julie?

DIXON. Of course.

BERNARD. Just so you stop worrying.

DIXON. I understand.

BERNARD. Just the location. That's it.

DIXON. Cross my heart.

BERNARD. Only because, I don't think Julie gets a sense of how these things affect people.

DIXON. No, I don't think she does.

(silence)

BERNARD. Last weekend. I don't know why she's making such a big deal out of it. But. Uh. My church had a retreat to New Jersey. So. I brought Julie along. That's it. Teaneck, New Jersey. That's where we were.

(more silence)

DIXON. Did you say *church*?

BERNARD. Yeah.

DIXON. But. Julie's Jewish.

BERNARD. Agnostic, actually.

DIXON. And are you... Christian?

BERNARD. My family belongs to New Light Korean Baptist
in Queens. Me, I mostly just go on all the free trips.

DIXON. Huh.

(beat)

Huh.

BERNARD. I'm going to go get the poster.

(BERNARD exits to JULIE's room.)

(DIXON sits with the information.)

(After a while, BERNARD returns with the poster.)

Please don't tell Julie.

DIXON. Just one question. Was it ironic? Her going to
church.

BERNARD. I promised I'd tell you where we went. That's it.

DIXON. Right.

BERNARD. Thanks for the weed.

DIXON. *(distracted)* Yup.

(BERNARD exits.)

Huh.

5.

(Dinner that night. DIXON unpacks Chinese food containers from a take-out bag. JULIE enters in her practice clothes. She goes straight to the fridge. Grabs a bottle of Gatorade and takes a sporty gulp.)

DIXON. Jesus, you're a beast.

JULIE. I get really thirsty.

DIXON. I see that. *(She burps.)* How did your presentation go?

JULIE. What presentation?

DIXON. Didn't you have some presentation this week?

I remember you saying something yesterday about it.

JULIE. *(on guard)* Yeah. It was fine. We got an A minus.

DIXON. Hey. Way to go.

JULIE. Why didn't you make dinner?

DIXON. I was working, lost track of time.

(JULIE takes another chug of Gatorade.)

You know Jules, you can talk to me. We're buds, right?
We go way back.

JULIE. Like, to my birth?

DIXON. I'm just saying. If there's something you want to talk about.

Anything on your mind –

(The door opens. PAM returns from work. She puts down her bags, laptop, etc.)

PAM. Chinese? I thought you were gonna cook?

DIXON. Yeah, my MSG count was down, so I figured...

PAM. How was practice?

(JULIE doesn't respond.)

Ah. I get the silent treatment. You lie to *me*, but I'm the one who's punished.

(JULIE digs into the Chinese food bag. She dumps an entire container of rice onto her plate, carbo-loading.)

DIXON. (to PAM) How was your day?

PAM. Fine. Frustrating. Fine.

DIXON. Any drama in the land of Documentary Programming?

PAM. No – this guy pitched a thing on Mormon cave dwellers, but I think the market's over-saturated with Mormon stories.

Did you get a lot done today?

DIXON. Slow but steady.

PAM. Oh! One of my co-workers. Her husband works in publishing, so I gave her your email. I figured why not, right?

JULIE. I'm getting a fork.

(PAM hands JULIE a fork.)

PAM. You know what I was thinking, Jules. Maybe we could go to a museum or something this weekend. You don't even have to talk to me. We can just watch the art silently together.

JULIE. I have practice.

PAM. On a weekend?

JULIE. Yeah. We've got championships coming up.

PAM. What about brunch Sunday morning. Before practice. We could all go.

DIXON. I never turn down a good brunch.

JULIE. Sunday morning...uh. I can't. I've got plans.

PAM. What plans?

JULIE. I have something with Bernard.

PAM. Well. He can come too. I'd love to meet him.

JULIE. Sorry. We have stuff to do.

PAM. Can you be more specific?

JULIE. No.

PAM. Why not?

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